

**SUMMARY OF THE  
FIELD ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 20, 2002**

The Field Activities Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Wednesday, November 20, 2002, at 9 a.m. Mountain Standard Time (MST) as part of the Eighth NELAC Interim Meeting in Santa Fe, NM.. Chairperson Dr. Barton Simmons of the California Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DTSC, Hazardous Materials Laboratory led the meeting. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to review proposed standards for field measurements and sampling, and to review transition issues.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dr. Simmons introduced his committee, including five new members to the committee, and committee members provided a brief review of their background. He also provided a historical review of the committee's function and its progress on issues related to field sampling and field measurement. Chapter 7 of the NELAC Standards, which has just recently been adopted, will not become effective until 2004.

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **Review of Minutes and Action Items from Last Teleconference**

Dr. Simmons reviewed the action items that exist for this committee as a result of their past teleconferences and meetings, and provided an overview of today's agenda items.

### **Transition to Standards-Development Organization**

The Field Activities committee will go out of existence at the end of the Ninth NELAC Annual Meeting (NELAC 9) in June 2003, and Dr. Simmons introduced discussion about who will pick up the reigns for standards development, particularly related to sampling. Options include utilizing standards submitted by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the creation of a field activities committee within the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) for development of standards. For now, this committee will continue to work on the agenda it has. Audience members expressed concern about the ability of private entities to continue to provide input into the development of standards and about the ability of INELA to adequately provide that opportunity. They urged the committee to consider fully utilizing the opportunities offered by ASTM standards. Dr. Simmons reviewed the numerous voluntary consensus-based standards development organizations, including ASTM, and recognized the opportunities they present to NELAC. He emphasized the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 17025 as a basis for NELAC Standards, including Chapter 7. He also pointed out that these organizations cannot be expected to provide all of NELAC's needs. Many items relevant to this transition will be discussed at other meetings at NELAC 8i this week.

Dr. Simmons suggested that the committee assist NELAC by providing a prioritized list of tasks for NELAC in developing standards for field activities after this committee no longer exists, and asked what the priorities should be. Responses to this request included development of reciprocal accreditation programs for source testing which are federally recognized. It was pointed out that there is currently no federal regulatory driver for creation of source emissions sampling accreditation programs, and that incentives need to be developed to encourage creation of and participation in stack testing and field sampling accreditation programs.

Other recommendations included ensuring that the scope of standards development activities not include simply stack testing but that it includes the wide variety of field sampling activities. It was recommended that the committee identify who the customers/data users/stakeholders in the process are, that the committee articulate the mission, and that it provide a general outline or sequence for the matrices to be addressed. Specific recommendations for standards development included the following:

- sampling methods,
- record keeping,
- personnel training,
- maintaining sample integrity and traceability,
- documentation of sample receipt and holding times at the laboratory,
- quality systems for field activities,
- and implementation of the quality system for field activities.

It was pointed out that the primary goal should be establishing an overall quality system to ensure that any sample going to a laboratory is a good sample.

### **Status of Source Emission Standards**

Dr. Simmons restated that there is a moratorium on the Field Activities Committee developing source emission standards. This moratorium was requested by NELAC and since the Field Activities Committee will no longer exist when the moratorium ends, the committee will not be developing these standards. Mr. Scott Evans provided an overview at Dr. Simmons' request of ASTM's progress on the development of source emission standards and invited attendees to join the ASTM Committee D22.08 to assist in this effort. Concern was expressed that the methods developed be true consensus standards and that their development include representation from small companies. Accreditation programs are also being considered by several agencies for monitoring of field sampling activities, and as Mr. James Davies pointed out, such programs are already in existence in Louisiana.

Dr. Simmons asked about the possibility of the Source Evaluation Society (SES) submitting standards to NELAC; at this time it appears that SES is not interested in developing standards nor has the resources necessary, however they are currently active with ASTM.

## **Field Measurement Definition**

The committee provided a new definition of “field measurement” for the glossary in Chapter 1, Appendix A of the NELAC Standards. The new definition reads: “The determination of physical, biological, or radiological properties, or chemical constituents; that are measured on-site, close in time and space to the matrices being sampled/measured, following accepted test methods. This testing is performed in the field outside of a fixed-laboratory or outside of an enclosed structure that meets the requirements of a mobile laboratory.” It was proposed that the word “test” be removed, but the definition of “test method” in the glossary was deemed appropriate by the committee. It was also proposed that the phrase “close in time and space” be removed. The committee will take the recommendations into consideration before recommending the definition as cited above.

## **Cross-Reference Matrix Among Chapter 5, Chapter 7, and ISO 17025**

Dr. Simmons discussed the common language in Quality Systems and Field Activities, the importance of their remaining parallel while changes are being made to Chapter 5 (Quality Systems), and the importance of bringing wording from Chapter 5 into Chapter 7 to assist users of Chapter 7 and to minimize the need for cross-referencing between chapters. A cross-reference matrix between the two chapters has been developed, and was presented (along with corrections to that matrix) by Mr. Ed Hartman. The matrix is an informational item only to assist with comparing the two chapters; it is not a change to Chapter 7 or to the NELAC Standards.

Mr. Hartman also presented a Field Activities Checklist to be used for on-site assessment purposes.

## **Proposed Changes to Chapter 7**

Dr. Simmons opened the floor to discussion of currently recommended changes to Chapter 7. Items discussed included language pertaining to oversight of employees/contractors (7.1.6.1), the need for duplication of Chapter 5 language throughout Chapter 7, the need to ensure that Chapter 7 maintains consistency and is parallel with all of the chapters. The committee will review all of the NELAC chapters to ensure that this consistency is maintained and that appropriate revisions will be made.

Another recommendation was to change Section 7.1.5.2 “final reports” to “issued reports.” Some attendees felt that this requirement might not adequately reflect the record of events and the data stream that resulted from the analysis of the samples. The committee deemed the current language acceptable, and cited the importance of parallel language between Chapter 5 and Chapter 7. The committee agreed to look closely at language imported from Chapter 5 (and other chapters) to ensure that it is placed appropriately and not redundant with other language.

An attendee recommended that in Section 7.1.8g, the NELAC Standards should require that latitude and longitude be used as the ultimate description of sampling location. The committee responded that the current language in Chapter 7 recommends the use of latitude and longitude information, but does not require it, and that this approach is appropriate at this time, particularly

since the accuracy of global positioning system (GPS) information is still quite variable, depending on the instrumentation used and the environment in which it is employed. The committee will take this issue under consideration.

Mr. Hartman asked attendees to provide their opinions regarding accreditation of field sampling/analysis versus providing guidance for field activities. Some attendees expressed support for providing guidance with an eventual approach to accreditation, while others felt that there is an immediate and critical need for accreditation of field sampling/analysis. They cited a serious lack of guidance emanating from federal and state agencies regarding field sampling and analysis. There are currently programs in existence, both federal and state, which require accreditation of field sampling and analysis.

After reviewing the action items for the committee, Dr. Simmons adjourned the meeting. The list of action items is attached, and a report of progress will be provided at NELAC 9 in June 2003 in San Diego, CA.

**Attachment A**

**ACTION ITEMS  
FIELD ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING  
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| <b>Item No.</b> | <b>Action</b>   | <b>Date to be Completed</b> |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1.              | Prepare list of accomplishments of the committee and list of priorities for future work and recommend tools to solve those priorities and make recommendations to NELAC | 6/1/03                      |
| 2.              | Add language to NELAC Standards specifying that laboratory sample log-in info be provided to sample collectors  | 3/1/03                      |
| 3.              | Review definition of field measurement  | 2/1/03                      |
| 4.              | Recommend maintenance of parallel language throughout the standards to NELAC  | 2/1/03                      |
| 5.              | Review Chapter 5 and others for relevant information to be included in chapter 7  | 3/1/03                      |
| 6.              | Review 7.1.5.2c regarding terminology referencing “reports”   | 2/1/03                      |
| 7.              | Look for redundancy in chapter 7 and eliminate where appropriate  | 2/2/03                      |
| 8.              | Review issue of guidance versus standards/accreditation   | 6/1/03                      |

**PARTICIPANTS  
FIELD ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 20, 2002**

| <b>Name</b>                            | <b>Affiliation</b>  | <b>Address</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| Barton Simmons, Chair                  | California EPA, DTSC,<br>Hazardous Materials Laboratory                       | T: (510) 540-3112<br>F: (510) 540-2305<br>E: DTSCR2.bsimmmons@dtsc.ca.gov   |
| Robert Darley                          | US Navy   | T: (843) 764-7337<br>F: (843) 764-7360<br>E: darleyre@navsea.navy.mil       |
| James Davies                           | Louisiana Dept. of<br>Environmental Quality,<br>Environmental Technology Div. | T: (225) 765-0582<br>F: (225) 765-2408<br>E: james_c@deq.state.la.us        |
| Ed Hartman                             | Hampton Roads Sanitation  | T: (757) 833-1751<br>F: (757) 886-0990<br>E: ehartman@hrsd.dst.va.us        |
| Peter Law<br>(not present)             | Severn Trent Laboratories   | T: (413) 572-4000<br>F: (413) 572-3707<br>E: plaw@stl-inc.com               |
| Glenn McGraw                           | Handex Environmental, Inc.  | T: (850) 906-9011<br>F: (850) 906-3199                                      |
| Dawn Thomas                            | Professional Service Industries,<br>Inc.                                      | T: (407) 304-5560<br>F: (407) 304-5561<br>E: dawn.thomas.@psiusa.com        |
| Andrew Tintle                          | Florida Dept. of Environmental<br>Protection                                  | T: (850) 921-9733<br>F: (850) 922-4614<br>E: andrew.tintle@dep.state.fl.us  |
| Franceska Wilde                        | USGS Office of Water Quality  | T: (703) 648-6866<br>F: (703) 648-5722<br>E: fwilde@usgs.gov                |
| Jan Wilson                             | Clean Water Services  | T: (503) 846-8938<br>F: (503) 846-8937<br>E: wilsonj@cleanwaterservices.org |
| Ian Beaty<br>(Contractor Support)      | RTI   | T: (202) 728-2488<br>F: (202) 728-2095<br>E: ibeaty@rti.org                 |
| Owen Crankshaw<br>(Contractor Support) | RTI   | T: (919) 541-7470<br>F: (919) 541-7386<br>E: osc@rti.org                    |